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UNCLAS YEREVAN 000869

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR EUR/CACEN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [AM](#)

SUBJECT: APRIL 12 DEMONSTRATIONS, MARCH TO THE
PRESIDENT END WITHOUT INCIDENT

REFS: A) YEREVAN 809 B) YEREVAN 844 C) YEREVAN 860

1. (U) Sensitive But Unclassified. Please treat
accordingly.

SUMMARY

2. (SBU) Between five and ten thousand opposition
demonstrators rallied peacefully April 12 in Yerevan
on Opera Square before moving roughly half a mile
down a major street toward the Presidential Palace.
Authorities made no attempts to slow or stop the
protesters until they reached a line of concertina
wire protecting the final approach to the Palace.
Demonstrators and authorities showed restraint with
no incidents by 9:30 p.m. local time. End Summary.

MARCH PAST THE EMBASSY

3. (SBU) Several thousand demonstrators moved along
Baghramian Street and past our Embassy without
incident on their way to the Presidential Palace
before they stopped at the concertina wire barricade
roughly two blocks from the Palace. The restrained
crowd chanted an occasional "Kocharian Out,"
listened to speeches and traditional Armenian folk
music and slowly trickled away, although a
significant number of opposition supporters were
still milling on the street as darkness fell at 9:30
local time.

BOTH SIDES SHOW RESTRAINT

4. (SBU) With ambulances, special service troops and
water canon standing by, authorities let the
opposition demonstrate without attempting to
intervene. The marchers proceeded in an orderly
fashion, with no pushing against the barrier or even
jostling each other. Both the government and the
opposition clearly wanted to avoid violence.

COMMENT: THEY CAME, THEY PROTESTED, THEY WENT HOME

5. (SBU) Although we expect that protests will
continue in the short term (beautiful spring weather
is certainly contributing to the opposition's
ability to draw crowds) we do not anticipate any
more serious consequences. The "revolutionary
spark" was simply not present at the April 12
demonstration and march; in fact, the atmosphere was
nearer that of a home football game (or a family
picnic that just wouldn't end) than that of an
enraged body politic.

ORDWAY